



Water Wise

Promoting communication among
New Mexico's community of water users.

Bucket Brigade Celebrates the First Completed Strategic Water Reserve Project

by Maureen Haney

A hay ride and the dashing of federal and state officials racing against time to get buckets of water to the Pecos River were just part of the celebration of the first splash of water from the Vaughan Pipeline on Wednesday, July 25 2007, which marked the completion of the first project for the Strategic Water Reserve.

The Strategic Water Reserve legislation has enabled collaboration between the federal and state water management agencies for the benefit of the environment and the public to enhance and protect our natural resources



without increasing the demand on those resources. Creative programs, like the Strategic Water Reserve, make possible the implementation of solutions with great promise, such as the Vaughan Pipeline project. This two-mile long pipeline will help meet Endangered Species Act needs, thus protecting other water rights in the process.



TOP: Interstate Stream Commission Director Estevan López and Bureau of Reclamation Upper Colorado Regional Director Rick Gold shake hands before the start of the ceremonial Bucket Brigade between agencies while Governor Bill Richardson's Planning and Policy Director Bill Hume observes. LEFT: State agency employees work together against the clock during the friendly competition against the Bureau of Reclamation team.

"This pipeline is an example of successful collaboration between state and federal agencies toward a common goal," said New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission Director Estevan López. "This project will make water available to the Bureau of Reclamation for environmental purposes while protecting other water rights and still allowing us to meet our compact obligations."

López as well as representatives from Governor Bill Richardson's Office, US Bureau of Reclamation, US Senator Pete Domenici's office, local dignitaries and others participated in a ribbon cutting followed by a ceremonial bucket brigade to deliver water to the Lower Pecos River.

"This is our first partnership project with the state undertaken as part of New Mexico's strategic water initiative. This project and the agreement to lease water is a great example of the State of New Mexico and the Bureau of Reclamation working together to improve conditions along the Pecos River without harming the water users who rely on the river," said Reclamation Albuquerque Area Manager Connie Rupp.

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Officials prepare to break ground (shown left to right): Gil Moutray of Seven Rivers, Inc, Bill Ahrens of CID, Bill Netherlin of PVACD, Pecos Compact Commissioner James Renfrow, Interstate Stream Commission Director Estevan López, John Poland of the Bureau of Reclamation, Lynn Ditto representing Senator Jeff Bingaman, Gloria Salas representing Senator Pete Domenici, former State Representative Joe Stell, and Interstate Stream Commissioner Phelps White.

Interstate Stream Commission Breaks Ground for the Seven Rivers Pipeline Project

Another milestone was reached in the implementation of the Pecos River Settlement Agreement as shovels were raised under the hot summer sun and the Interstate Stream Commission broke ground for the Seven Rivers Pipeline Project on June 22 near Carlsbad, New Mexico.

“This pipeline is an integral part of implementing the Pecos Settlement, and it will help us meet our interstate compact requirements, as well as improve the water supply outlook for the Carlsbad Irrigation District,” said New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission Director Estevan López. “The progress made to date indicates that the \$66 million provided in recent years by the New Mexico State Legislature is producing tangible results.”

More than 50 people attended the event including Interstate Stream Commissioners, as well as representatives from US Sen. Pete Domenici's and Jeff Bingaman's offices, the Carlsbad Irrigation District (CID), the Pecos Valley Artesian Conservancy District (PVACD), the US Bureau of Reclamation, and State Legislators including former State Representative Joe Stell.

The pipeline connects wells in the Seven Rivers area near Carlsbad to Brantley Lake on the Pecos River. It is 12 inches to 36 inches wide and has the capacity to deliver 20,000 acre-feet of water per year to the river. The Seven Rivers Pipeline Project is expected to be completed by the end of 2007.

In 2003, the State of New Mexico, CID, PVACD, and the United States entered into a settlement, that when implemented, will put an end to 50 years of litigation and will result in the adjudication of the Carlsbad Irrigation

District's Project water rights. Additionally, the settlement will help the state comply with obligations under the Pecos River Compact as decreed by the United States Supreme Court in 1988.

Augmentation pumping sites are being developed at three locations, including the primary site in the Seven Rivers area. This well field has 10 artesian wells that were drilled and tested during the period of March 2005 to June 2006. These wells and an additional six private wells will be connected by this series of pipelines that can carry about 20,000 gallons per minute from the wells to Brantley Reservoir.

The Bureau of Reclamation has contributed \$1 million to the Seven Rivers Pipeline Project through the Water 2025 Program for work related to water efficiency and supply supplementation in compliance with the Settlement Agreement.

“Reclamation is pleased to continue building a successful partnership with the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission and the Carlsbad Irrigation District and to see work begin on this important piece of the settlement agreement,” said Reclamation Albuquerque Deputy Area Manager John Poland.

The Water 2025 Program is aimed at preventing crises and conflict in the West by encouraging voluntary water banks, promoting the use of new technology for water conservation and efficiency and increasing cooperation and collaboration among federal, state, tribal and private organizations. Reclamation is also collaborating with Interstate Stream Commission through a license agreement allowing the project to cross Reclamation land in route to Brantley Reservoir. ♦

Rio Gallinas Open House Workshop in Las Vegas

More than 40 people attended an Open House Workshop designed to educate, inform, and answer water-related questions about the Rio Gallinas basin, which was hosted by the Office of the State Engineer the evening of August 16, at the Luna Community College in Las Vegas, New Mexico from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Below left: Basin Manager Jerri Trujillo answers water rights questions. Below right: Participants completed exit surveys and received water bottles.



Participants had valuable one-on-one time with State Engineer John D'Antonio, the area Water Master Larry Vigil, and other agency staff to pose questions and gather information about key water issues in the Rio Gallinas basin.

Information was provided on the following topics: Active Water Resource Management, Metering, Hydrology, Water Conservation, Basic Water Rights Administration, Domestic Wells, Legal Issues, Hydrographic Survey, and State Engineer Rules and Regulations.

More information about Rio Gallinas water issues is located on the website of the Office of the State Engineer at www.ose.state.nm.us under "Rio Gallinas Public Outreach" under "Hot Topics." ♦



Librarian Hired

Polly McCord is charged with managing the operation and maintenance of the Office of the State Engineer Library, located in the Bataan Building in Santa Fe. The library is an information source for history, science, and use and management of New Mexico's water resources.

COMMUNITY BRIEF

Deming District Temporary Office Open to the Public

The New Mexico State Engineer's Deming District II Office is open for business at a new location in the old Deming Library, located at 301 Tin Street. The former district office, located at 216 S Silver Street, temporarily closed in mid May due to structural issues. Calls will be answered regarding domestic well permits, water rights, or other issues at (505) 546-2851.

"Our staff is dedicated to serving the needs of the water users in the southern New Mexico area," said District III Supervisor Charles Jackson. "We will notify the public as soon as possible when a permanent office space is located."

The Deming District III Office administers water rights for Animas, Cloverdale, Gila-San Francisco, Hatchita, Lordsburg, Mimbres, Mount Riley, Nutt-Hockett, Playas, San Simon, Viriden Valley and Yaqui underground water and surface basin rights. ♦

Los Lunas Silvery Minnow Refugium Update

Great strides have been made on the state's Rio Grande silvery minnow refugium in Los Lunas since construction began on April 16, 2007. Most of the rehabilitation of the storage building has been completed, the old fire station has been converted to an indoor hatchery, the site for the office building has been staked and a foundation was built. In addition, the outdoor refugium site, outlet structure, and infiltration gallery were excavated.

The Los Lunas Refugium is required as part of the March 2003 biological opinion for the Rio Grande silvery minnow related to Middle Rio Grande water operations. This new \$1.2 million cutting-edge facility will help with the recovery of the Rio Grande silvery minnow by providing a place for the fish to spawn and grow in an environment that closely resembles its natural habitat. It was made possible by state funding, which included two grants from the Water Trust Board plus additional funding from the Interstate Stream Commission. Non-federal cost sharing was provided by the Endangered Species Collaborative Program for the design and construction costs. ♦



Main indoor drainage channel under construction at the refugium

COMMUNITY BRIEF

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The pipeline project, costing just over \$824,000, started on April 2, 2007 and took nearly four months to complete. The pipeline directs water from 10 wells to the Pecos River. By leasing water to the Bureau of Reclamation, the Interstate Stream Commission will, over time, recover the capital outlay costs incurred during acquisition of the water rights and construction of the pipeline infrastructure and will have a source of funding to support operations and maintenance. In return, Reclamation has an important water resource available to them to remain in compliance with the Biological Opinion for the Pecos bluntnose shiner.

Members of the Vaughan family were present at the festivities, which took place on their ranch near Ft. Sumner.

“Clearly the Vaughan Family has shown a real respect for the land,” said Lopez, “But they also recognize that there are some overarching priorities we’re dealing with.” ♦

Children’s Water Festival Volunteers Needed!

- Guides/timekeepers for student groups
- In-class assistants for activity presenters
 - Welcome team
 - Logistical support
- Needed 8:30 am-1:30 pm
- Breakfast, lunch, parking provided

Rio Rancho-Oct 1 & 2, Albuquerque-Oct 25 & 26

Call Katie at 505-975-0036 to volunteer, or email katie@waterfestnm.com. For info: www.waterfestnm.com

For more information about the Office of the State Engineer and Interstate Stream Commission efforts, visit www.ose.state.nm.us.

New Manager Hired for the Canadian River Basin



by Jaclynn Castañón

A new manager for the Canadian River Basin was hired to work in the Albuquerque District Office.

Dr. Mark Murphy is charged with managing the operation of the Ute Reservoir to assist with making sure New Mexico stays compliant with the Canadian River Compact, which allocates the waters of the river between New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma. Also, he will be managing implementation of the settlement agreement for the Eagle Nest Reservoir to conserve, augment and administer surface water use effectively for the state.

Murphy was previously employed for seven years as a water resources scientist for the URS Corporation. He also worked as a water resources scientist for Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, the New Mexico Mining and Minerals Bureau and Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM). He taught hydrogeology and geology courses at Heritage College in Toppenish, Washington and at Arizona State in Phoenix, Arizona.

In 1977, Murphy earned a Bachelor of Science degree in geology from the University of California Santa Cruz. He earned a Master of Science degree in geology in 1985 from the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, NM. In 1990, he earned a Ph.D. in geology from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. ♦



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